

Enlarging the number of SLP trainees: one success story that partnered a University with an LEA

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Background

- A few years ago, I was informed by the President of another University in our state system that a local school system had requested that they develop an SLP grad program on his campus.
- Because he had previously served as MY Associate Dean, he knew he didn't want to do this.



Why NOT just start more programs?

- They cost a tub of money
 - My budget is now well over a million dollars per year
- They have facilities needs that are unique:
 - Clinic space, observation, sound booths, parking...
- And... they don't guarantee that students enter the shortage areas.



Why NOT expand existing programs?

- You need more personnel/money (for supervision, especially) and most state budgets will not easily increase to allow this
- You still can't guarantee that the students will go where needed.



Our proposed joint solution:

- We would admit up to five additional students per cohort, if they expressed willingness to enter into a contract with the LEA.
- The LEA would provide salary for one additional supervisor
 - The University offered a line and paid benefits, not a small thing to do.



More...

- The LEA would fully fund five students per year for tuition in the SLP program
 - For this, the students had to agree to work in the LEA for 3 years following graduation
 - The University agreed to treat all students as in-state, for the purposes of calculating tuition costs
 - Again, not a small thing.



Financial bottom line

- It cost the LEA
 - \$20K per student
 - ~65K annually for the supervisor
- It cost the University
 - Benefit costs
 - Office support
 - Out-of-state tuition forgone



More bottom line:

- Despite costs to the LEA, comparison of what was currently spent using outside consultants vs. the new proposal meant that the LEA would recoup its investment within a year after each student's graduation.



Benefits

- The LEA also gets the benefit of increased student outside placement labor, and the ability to use the students as substitutes as appropriate.
- The students get to participate in a program that works hard to educate and train them to their chosen placement desire: the public schools.



Is it working?

- To date, we have 15 participants; the first 5 entered their CFY job placements this season.
- This year's competition for new scholarships was surprisingly less active than prior years.
 - We are not sure why



Long-term benefits

- If we keep it up, the standing shortage will be virtually closed within five years.
- New opportunities for collaboration between the LEA and the University:
 - Grants
 - Workshops, continuing education, etc.
 - And we are finally talking to each other!



Is there a down-side?

- It was an unusual agreement for our University, and students still get caught in financial goofs.
 - We are working on it, but we are a big place and this was a little and “baroque” agreement.
- Classes and facilities are more crowded; this was a 15-20% increase in class size.
 - Student satisfaction WAS lower on exit interviews.



Other limitations

- We all agreed not to change normal admissions requirements
 - Thus, some folks who WANT to be trained or upgraded cannot – they don't compete with our usual application cohort.
 - We refuse to have a two-tiered system of training in which students are treated differently in terms of abilities or expectations.
- For us, it reinforces the wisdom of “signing up” talented students in their professional training program, rather than “making do” with waivers, etc.



Thoughts, feedback and suggestions?

